

Rapidity in granting clearance to SEZ proposals

726. SHRI S.M. LALJAN BASHA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to news item appearing in the Financial Express dated the 4th November, 2006, captioned "Reports of more than 150 SEZ proposals referred by Board of Approvals";

(b) if so, what are the reasons for the rapidity in clearance all the SEZ approvals;

(c) whether it is a fact that the SEZ Board has ignored numerous infirmities and false statistics in most of the applications;

(d) if so, what steps would be taken to review all the clearances given by the SEZ Board;

(e) whether it is a fact that no public hearings were held before giving such clearances; and

(f) if so, the reasons for ignoring the procedure?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) to (d) The applications received for setting up of Special Economic Zones were processed and cleared by the Board of Approvals as per the provisions laid down in the Special Economic Zones Act, 2005 and the Special Economic Zones Rules, 2006.

(e) The SEZ Act, 2005 and the SEZ Rules, 2006 do not provide for holding a public hearing before giving clearances for setting up SEZs.

(f) Does not arise.

Salt Pans in Mumbai

727. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) what is the total area of salt pans in Mumbai and who are their owners;

(b) how many persons are employed in cultivating salt in these salt pans;

(c) whether the Ministry proposes to allot the land of these salt pans for low cost housing, for the resettlement of slum dwellers; and

(d) if so, the details in these regard and what are plans of the Ministry to resettle the workers working on these salt pans?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR): (a) The area of salt pan lands in district Mumbai and district Mumbai Suburban is 5378 acres. These lands are owned by the Government. However, in many cases where the Government had granted lease/license for manufacture of salt, licensees/lessees or their successors have claimed ownership rights over salt lands and there are several cases of ongoing litigations.

(b) Presently 437 labourers are engaged in the salt industry in the Bhandup, Trombay and Wadala salt factories in Mumbai.

(c) and (d) Though presently no proposal is under consideration for low cost housing, the Government had taken an 'in-principle' decision to use the salt pan lands to meet the bonafide needs of Government departments, to implement urban infrastructure projects and for other public purposes.

Multi-product SEZ near Visakhapatnam

728. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have allowed a multi-product SEZ near Visakhapatnam;

(b) if so, the approval given for any SEZ in or near Visakhapatnam;

(c) the area, category and type and product-specific SEZ permitted at Visakhapatnam;

(d) whether Government have allowed prime agricultural land to be included in this SEZ;

(e) if so, the details of the SEZ, and